

Joint Plan of the Cultural Sub-Working Group

December 8, 2009

Objectives:

To foster a new understanding and respect for the cultures of the two nations. Focus on cultural projects that promote diversity and tolerance. Specific outreach to youth and to regions of the U.S. and Russia that do not have exposure to learn about the other's culture.

Two big Ideas that would be investigated and then discussed more concretely in March:

1. Creating databases to include cultural organizations in the U.S. and Russia that are interested in pursuing cultural exchanges and sharing cultural resources. This database could be placed on a website devoted to the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission, which would include upcoming programs supported by the Commission, as well as highlights of programs.
2. In the U.S., celebrate Russian culture with activities over a one-year period, and in Russia celebrate U.S. culture the previous year. 2013 and 2014 are possible programming years. In the U.S., this could include a focus on Russia at the Smithsonian's Folk Life Festival, which draws an audience of one million people, and exhibitions highlighting the 250th anniversary of the Hermitage. Programming would include cultural activities in cities and towns throughout the U.S. and outreach to schools and universities through scholarly conferences. Arts organizations would be able to begin plans for programs now.

In the near term the proposals for further exploration between December 2009 and March 2010 include:

1. U.S.-Russia university-to-university Internet connections to provide master classes in the arts. This could include providing American students with the opportunity to study with acting professors at the Moscow Arts Theater, and Russian students with the chance to sit in on classes with professors and students at the University of Iowa Writers Program, among other classes.
2. Investigate opportunities for musical performers to conduct concerts and master classes in Russia and the United States.

3. Professional exchanges on such topics as cultural preservation, technology and education, emergency preparedness planning for art collection preservation, audience research, and social media strategies for museums through the American Association of Museums (AAM), the Smithsonian, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and CEC ArtsLink. Immediately, AAM could offer opportunities to Russian museum professionals through its webinars.
4. National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) sends *Picturing America* to Russia. This virtual poster exhibition uses masterpieces of American art as a catalyst for the study of America—the cultural, political, and historical threads woven into our nation’s fabric over time. This an excellent tool for use in high schools.
5. Russia considers creating a *Picturing Russia* exhibit for use in U.S. schools.
6. The *Smithsonian Institution* and the Polytechnic Museum begin discussions on exchanging collections (for example patent models from the Smithsonian Institute) for exhibit ineach other’s countries.
7. In cooperation with the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, include Russian participation in the Coming Up Taller Awards and AFI 20/20. Coming Up Taller recognizes and supports outstanding community arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of young people, provide them learning opportunities and chances to contribute to their communities. The award ceremony takes place at the White House with the First Lady. AFI 20/20, which is designed to enhance cultural exchange, understanding, and collaboration through filmmakers and their films from the U.S. and abroads, would send a Russian filmmaker to the U.S. and bring an American filmmaker to Russia.
8. Explore the possibility of the webcasting of performances from Russia and the U.S.
9. Explore the exchange of exhibitions between museums in the U.S. and Russia. For example: Norman Rockwell Museum exhibition of 20th Century America mass media through Norman Rockwell Saturday Evening poster covers; exhibition on tolerance and diversity through the eyes of Norman Rockwell’s civil rights paintings of the 1960s; and a third concept of an exhibition of Soviet Realists and Norman Rockwell.
10. Through the Library of Congress continue collaboration with Russia in the World Digital Library.

11. Opportunities for American and Russian cultural professionals to interact at professional meetings of arts organizations, including the American Association of Museums, the National Trust and others.
12. Virtual book exhibit of the 65th anniversary of the Russian/U.S. alliance during World War II.
13. Make available cultureonline.ru which provides access to Russian video archives, exhibitions, and performances.



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